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TO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9813
INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 162809

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: APPLYING A PUSH ON BURMA

Classified By: IO A/S Kristen Silverberg, E.O. 12958
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: USUN is instructed to meet as soon as possible with Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari and with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to obtain a readout on Gambari's latest travel and their assessment of the overall situation in Burma. USUN should convey, drawing on objectives in para 2 below, our concern at the lack of action by the regime and remind Gambari that Aung San Suu Kyi has stressed the need to conclude preliminary talks by January 4, the next Burmese Independence Day, with a joint declaration on dialogue. Department would appreciate USUN's thoughts on whether the P3 should participate in either a joint demarche or make separate demarches. End of Summary and Action Request.

¶2. (S) OBJECTIVES:

- Obtain a readout of Gambari's latest trip and seek his thoughts on the dynamic within ASEAN regarding Burma and support for the UN good offices mission;
- Seek Gambari,s (and, if possible, SYG Ban's) assessment of the current state of the Burma dialogue process and next steps he is contemplating, including dates for his next trip;
- Express our concern about the Burmese regime's lack of response to Gambari and ASSK's invitation to dialogue, as well as about the regime's continuing arrests of democratic activists;
- Emphasize the importance of establishing a structure, including benchmarks and time-frames for the regime to meet, that would lead to a dialogue on a transition in Burma;
- Indicate that absent any meaningful progress in the next several weeks, we will need to look at alternative measures, including Security Council options. These preparations should include relaxation of restrictions on ASSK and others who would need to take part in a dialogue; formal confirmation by the Burmese regime that it will participate in the dialogue in good faith; and setting a date for the dialogue to begin;
- Indicate that absent any meaningful progress in the next several weeks, we will need to look at alternative measures, including public statements by Gambari and Ban and Security Council options;
- Clarify Gambari,s plans for the Core Group or Group of Friends, and note that the U.S. does not support Burmese government participation in it;
- Advise Gambari of ASSK,s desire to conclude preliminary talks by January 4 with a joint statement on beginning a dialogue;

-- Query Gambari about Ban's travel to Thailand and urge him to weigh in with Ban on the need to discuss Burma while there;

-- Emphasize our concern that Gambari's proposed meeting with the constitution drafting committee is inadvisable, as it is likely to lend legitimacy to the regime's "road map," which lacks any popular support. Since the constitution drafting committee has no authority or power to broaden participation in the drafting process, absent higher-level approval, we see no benefit in meeting with it;

-- Stress that constitution drafting should not proceed before a dialogue with democratic and ethnic minority groups and without their participation and support; and

-- FOR SYG BAN: Draw out Ban's potential interest in mediating the Burma situation himself, and urge him to raise Burma during his upcoming travel to Bangkok.

¶3. (U) POINT OF CONTACT - USUN is requested to inform Department of results as soon as possible via cable slugged for IO/UNP - Paul Wickberg and EAP/MLS - Aaron Cope.

¶4. (C) BACKGROUND - A Deputies Committee meeting on November 29 decided that USUN should meet as soon as possible with Gambari to hear details of his recent trip to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as his overall assessment of the status of the UN effort to facilitate a dialogue in Burma. We need to convey our strong concern that the Burmese regime has made

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no response to the opportunity for dialogue opened by Gambari's last visit to Burma and by the statement from ASSK that Gambari released, declaring her openness to a "meaningful and time-bound dialogue" with the regime. USUN should try to meet with SYG Ban as well to convey the same concerns. Specifically, we believe the UN needs to set an early deadline for real progress, including the release of ASSK and other political prisoners and a firm commitment from the Burmese regime to begin such a dialogue, along with a concrete date for it to begin. If the Burmese regime failed to respond, Gambari and SYG Ban should publicly acknowledge that and press the regime to act on its professed commitment to cooperate with the UN. Without such pressure, we believe that Gambari is likely to continue making trips that would lead nowhere but would allow those opposed to further international action to block such actions on the grounds that they do not want to undermine Gambari as long as he is making progress.

¶5. (C) On December 3, Burmese Minister of Information Kyaw Hsan and Director General of Police Kyin Yi briefed members of the diplomatic corps in Nay Pyi Taw on the recent demonstrations in Burma and next steps in the regime's "road map." Minister Kyaw Hsan asserted that "destructive elements" and "western powers" had conspired to instigate the protest marches of August and September and that these demonstrations in fact demonstrated no popular dissatisfaction with the regime. He also announced that the constitutional drafting committee had begun work. Delegates to the convention would not commit to a timeframe for completion of the document, but he assured diplomats that the document would be approved by consensus. Minister Kyaw Hsan added that while the regime had been "patient and gracious" with the NLD despite its violations of the law, if the NLD interfered in the constitution drafting process the authorities would not be so tolerant. He blamed lack of progress towards dialogue on ASSK's refusal to renounce sanctions and "utter devastation," as Senior General Than Shwe had demanded of her. The Minister of Information denied rumors that Gambari would not be permitted to return, but claimed that the UN Special Advisor had not formally proposed another trip.

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